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REFLECTIONS

ON THE

PRESSENT STATE

OF OUR

EAST-INDIA Affairs.

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J. Thomas & Co.

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With many INTERESTING ANECDOTES,  
Never before made public.

By a Gentleman long resident in INDIA

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L O N D O N:

Printed for T. LOWNDS, in *Fleet-street*. 1764.

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THE love of our country stands foremost in the rank of human virtues; it is of such high esteem that every man aspires at being thought possessed of it. Its value to society being inestimable, no wonder it is so strongly inculcated on individuals. We are taught to ward off the *danger of our country* at the risque of our own safety and lives. Can any one then who sees this danger with large strides approaching her, stand aloof, and not even give her the alarm? I do not pretend to be the only sagacious person in these kingdoms; but if others who do perceive it should, through selfishness or indolence,

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hold their peace, I, who have an equal interest with every other person in the general weal, shall make use of the privilege which that gives me, to speak. I have reason to think that the generality of people do not conceive the common good and safety to be so highly interested in our commerce to the *East Indies* as they really are; but being convinced that this trade is of the last and greatest import to England, and also apprehending it to be in imminent danger, I hope that it will not be judged impertinent in me to communicate my fears; which, though they should at present prove vain, yet will they answer one excellent end, viz. that rousing the attention of the publick to this grand, though neglected object, it may be induced to keep a watchful eye over the conduct of that company, which is by the nation entrusted with the charge of what is termed by a judicious and well-informed writer, *a grand wheel of commerce, setting all the others in motion*. My intention however is not to strike invidiously at the being of the company; so far from it, I shall in the sequel endeavour to remove the popular prejudices which have been raised against it, being satisfied that instead of being *prejudicial*, it is absolutely necessary to the *existence of this trade*, which in any other way could not subsist

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at all : But my design is to prevent its hiding from the eye of the public, by skinning it over, a wound which it hath neither the skill nor power to cure, while the corruption proceeds inwards, till it seises and taints the vital parts.

As little has been written of late on the subject of our company's affairs, previously to entering on the present situation of them, I shall give a short and general view of the importance of this trade to England, and of the interest the nation has in the conduct and well-being of the company. And though this may seem superfluous and unnecessary to such as have already studied it, yet to such as have not had leisure to look into these matters, it will serve to elucidate what I am going to say on the subject, as well as by interesting them, engage their attention. I shall next take upon me to give a short account of the nature of this great company, as also of the manner how, and by whom, their affairs are conducted in Europe ; and shall afterwards proceed to a detail of the nature and situation of their affairs in India.

Having before declared my reasons for communicating my sentiments on this subject to the public, I need not mention that prejudice and envy can hold no place here ; and I further hope that this integrity and

uprightness of the intention will throw a covering over the nakedness and imperfections of the execution.

I am sensible that the value of our East-India trade has been greatly depreciated in the eyes of my countrymen, by arguments used as well against the general utility of this trade to Europe, as against the particular benefit arising from it to England. These two, in this case, very distinct interests, have been on this occasion blended together, and the force of both united, in order to sink it in the estimation of the public; whereas to form a proper judgment of its worth, these two interests ought to be most carefully separated. In forming the calculation betwixt Europe and India, it hath been advanced that bullion being the true sign of trade, and the balance in that article being greatly against the former, it must of consequence be a very losing trade to Europe. It is not at all material to my purpose to decide this point, which is disputed, and which to England is almost entirely speculative; her business is to examine whether it be or be not a losing trade to her. If she gains while other European nations lose, it is naturally more the business of those losers than of England to obviate this evil; it would be weak and absurd in her to sacrifice an evident interest to the general  
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good of Europe, whilst she has neighbours who would very industriously take up what she for such end laid down. But granting bullion to be the true criterion of trade, and that half of what our company sends to purchase her cargo in the Indies consists of that article, and never returns from thence; yet if the company doth replace from other countries a sum equal to that which she exports to India, and this by her charter she is obliged to do, that trade cannot even by this standard be deemed a losing one to England. The odium annexed to the idea of monopoly and exclusive trade has also suggested arguments aimed either obliquely through the sides of the company, or directly against the trade itself. It is said that the nation has but a distant concern in the interest of the company, who dividing the benefit and profits arising from their trade amongst the proprietors of their stock, the existence of it is of little more consequence to the nation, than that of some great trading houses in London, which if they fail, their place will be supplied by others. But let people be cautious in distinguishing betwixt a trade itself, and any particularity in the manner of carrying on that trade: It will appear that every person in England, although he be no proprietor in the company's stock, is interested in the success

success of this trade, even as every landed gentleman is concerned in the safety of the national credit, although he may hold no share in the funds. Whether the being of this company is or is not necessary to the nation, will more properly fall under consideration in another place; the question at present is not whether this trade shall or shall not be carried on exclusively, but whether England shall or shall not hold a share in it at all. The direct arguments used against this trade are, that the wearing of India piece-goods prejudices our own woollen and silk manufactures; and that the exportation of *India* goods is disadvantageous, because it is conjectured to lessen the consumption of our own manufactures, in those countries to which the produce of *India* is exported. To give place here to the answers which have sufficiently refuted these ill-grounded cavils, would occasion too great a digression from my main point; but by presenting a view of the trade of our East-India company, which I do not however take upon me to give as a just, but as a much undervalued calculation, every man will be able to judge for himself, of what import it is to the nation. Supposing then the company doth export every year to the East-Indies to the amount of only 1,500,000 l. sterling, one half of this in bullion, the other  
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in manufactures, metals, &c. this sum invested there in India piece-goods, drugs, &c. with China manufactures and teas, produces at the company's sales in England a sum greatly above *double* the amount of the first export; that is to say, above 3,000,000 *l.* The buyers at these sales vend we may suppose about one half in London, for the consumption of the three kingdoms; the other half, amounting to 1,500,000 *l.* or the whole of the company's first cost, is exported to other countries; which, after paying freight to these countries, with other charges, and a proper premium to the adventurer, must be imagined to be returned to England, increased to at least 2,000,000 *l.* Now the bullion part of these returns does much more than replace the whole amount of the company's original export in that article; and the balance is made up in commodities, for which Britain must otherwise, at least for the greatest part of them, pay bullion. Thus by this trade England gets rid every year of a quantity of her manufactures, to the amount of 750,000 *l.* sterling, to countries which, but for it, would not take off one pound's worth. Her trade in these *Indian* commodities to other countries is exceedingly great and beneficial; and these two branches of this trade employing a number of her subjects, doth greatly extend her

her commerce. And let us not overlook the first half, said to be consumed in the three kingdoms, which I am aware some will say can be of no benefit to the nation, as being in itself superfluous, unnecessary, and what we could very well do without. I shall reply, that such an argument is a very odd one in the mouths of a people, who draw such immense sums from other nations, for the self-same and other superfluities. It is true, we might do without these articles; Europe subsisted long without an intercourse with India, but now it is opened, we find that all our neighbour nations, even such as are excluded from a direct commerce with it, do make a great use of its commodities; and can any one imagine that England, supposing she were also to be excluded from this direct commerce, could be brought, on such account, to deny herself the use of what she has been now so long accustomed to, while she could be supplied by her neighbours the French and Dutch? No surely, these neighbours would draw from her every year in specie, for her own consumption, a sum equal to the whole of what our company at present exports, possibly much more, as an unrivalled monopoly would no doubt induce them to raise their prices on us. Such an exclusion to England must also throw  
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into the hands of these rivals, that grand branch of English commerce in these commodities, to other parts of Europe, to Africa, and to America ; for we are not to suppose that those whom we at present supply would leave off the use of them, for this sole reason, that England could no longer furnish them.—As an occasional enhancement of the value of this East-India trade, I might mention the sums annually remitted from those countries to England by her adventurous sons ; the fortunes acquired there by all such as go out, and they seldom carry much with them, do, whether they die there, or live to come home, contribute a mite to the accession of her wealth. Nor will this seem altogether so contemptible, when I assert that the sums remitted by such from one particular settlement alone, amounted in one year to near two millions sterling, besides the immense sums received there that same year by the company, in the way of donations ; and although these did not arrive here in specie, yet every one knows how to transfer such sums paid into the company's cash in India, to the account of their export of bullion in Europe. By this time it may be unnecessary to call in for the support of my argument the example of other European nations, who have expressed their sense of the value of this

commerce by the most strenuous endeavours to come at a share of it. Nations which never were traders before have commenced such, to have a part in this trade, and those who have once tasted the sweets of it, have always used their utmost efforts to preserve and extend it. We have seen *Europe* in a blaze through the struggles made to obtain a share in this commerce, by those who through tardiness had been excluded, and the determined resolution of the others to preserve what they had acquired.

But though, as I before observed, this mighty branch of *British* commerce hath been represented by me greatly below its real and true value; yet, if it is but equal, what a dreadful amputation must the loss of it be? Such a diminution too of our trade and wealth, becoming an addition to that of an already dreaded neighbour, must appear not only dangerous to, but destructive of the power, safety, and independence of this kingdom. If these interesting points therefore are thus liable to be affected by the conduct of this company, how watchful ought we to be over it, how careful that it does not abuse the trust reposed in it by the nation? And indeed, when we come to consider the nature and constitution of this company, and how it is composed; if we also enquire into the number and quality

lity of the persons to whom it deputed its authority, together with the characters, capacities, and acquired light of those who have been intrusted with the charge of their weighty affairs in India, it will appear to be almost time to look about us, and see whether we may rest secure on their good management.

The proprietors of this company's stock are numerous, consisting of men, women, and children, foreigners as well as natives. This stock being also transferable like other public funds, is frequently shifting in the hands of such as know no more of the company's affairs, than any of the temporary stockholders know of the transactions at the Cockpit: The whole secret rests in the breasts of a few, a very few individuals, who have an interest in concealing it; therefore those who imagine that the nation is secured against any misconduct of the company, by the interposition of the numerous proprietors, will find themselves woefully mistaken. As an instance of the ignorance in which this fluctuating body is kept by its managers, I shall only mention, that some years ago a general court having been demanded by a few of the proprietors, it was then required by these, that in order to satisfy them of the real state of their affairs, the books of the company

should be produced and shewn; but they were given to understand by the directors, that it was not for the interest of the company that their books should be exposed to public view; for that it would make certain people too wise. The majority of the court not insisting on it, the thing was dropped, and they remained in the dark. As the stock is saleable, no man needs retain it longer than he pleases; if he is dissatisfied with the conduct of the company, he has his redress by selling out his share: Thus he is interested in their welfare only from day to day. Five hundred pounds in stock give the owner a title to vote in a general court; 2000 l. qualifies him to be chosen a director. The charge of their affairs is entrusted to 24 directors, including the chairman and deputy chairman. Of the proprietors, few are qualified by stock for the place of director. Of those who are qualified, few choose to confine themselves to the necessary attendance: Therefore, till last year, disputes for this place were but rare. Amongst the candidates there is generally one, who, by dint of drudgery and application to the business of the India house, the principal quality hitherto possessed by or requisite to any of them, has rendered himself necessary in the direction. This person takes upon him to form a list of  
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of such directors for the ensuing year as are agreeable to him, copies of which list are usually delivered out beforehand to his own friends, but to others they are distributed at the door of the house when the proprietors assemble to vote. If the proprietor receiving this list dislikes any one or more names, he scratches such out, and inserting others, delivers it in as his list. If, as last year, there be several lists, he takes that of his friend. When all are delivered in, the different lists are scrutinized, and the majority declared. Thus there is always in the list a leader; and though there may be some scratches, yet has it been seldom, if ever known, that he failed of even one member of his list; and, as a noble candidate expressed himself at the last year's election, this leader will always, if not very hard pushed, take care not to introduce any with him that shall dispute his authority; at the worst, he will be sure to bring in such as will, upon any occasion, form a majority for him. Hence it appears that the power of the company, though vested in 24 names, doth notwithstanding rest in one person, who, when he is placed in his chair, is supposed to be the mouth of this company. Sitting at the helm, he directs their affairs with unlimited authority; he raiseth up, and he putteth down. In this manner are their affairs conducted

ducted in Europe. As to their servants in India, who are the executors of their orders, and more immediately upon the scene of action, they are, except a very few instances, composed of young gentlemen, taken immediately from school to be sent there ; for as these servants there have generally till of late risen in rotation and standing, the parents or friends of such gentlemen don't choose they should lose any time. Going abroad therefore thus young, before their education and understanding are well formed, into a country where jollity and good fellowship reign in a very high degree, it is but seldom that they improve by study what they acquired at school : It is even much if they preserve it. Thus we cannot expect to find among them many men of deep or improved understanding ; it is true indeed we have seen among them a CLIVE, but he was a *rara avis* ; Nature had done wonders in him. It may perhaps be replied here, that the government of the company's affairs is on the same footing as it always has been, and that the gentlemen at present in that trust are equal in abilities and skill to those who have conducted their business with acknowledged address and success from the commencement of the company till this present time ; and that, if matters have hitherto gone well, what

what reason have we to alarm ourselves with unnecessary fears for the future? To this I answer, that if the affairs of the company were on the same footing at present as they had remained from such commencement till a few years ago, the gentlemen now in trust might be, no doubt, quite equal to such charge. While the business of directors in Europe was only to answer letters of commerce, to load ships with their indented cargoes, and to vend the returns, an ordinary genius, with a little application, might very well discharge the task. Nor were extraordinary talents requisite to their servants in India, as living like merchants under the protection of the prince in whose dominions they resided, to barter a little broad cloth, silver, lead, iron, steel, &c. for piece-goods of certain fabricks, or for other commodities wanted in Europe: While this remained the sole business of the company in India, matters went very well, Fair trade being in these times the only path to riches, their servants there were induced to apply to and study it; and as fortunes are by means of it but slowly and gradually acquired, the rise to trust in that employ was in consequence but slow and gradual. Rarely did any man in those days reach the dignity of counsellor, till after a faithful service of the company for twenty years; and

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in that station he generally, barring death, continued satisfied for ten or twelve years longer. Thus were they till of late served in these countries by a set of gentlemen mature in years, and masters of their business, who were aided in the execution of their orders from Europe by inferiors, whom experience had rendered fit for it. Of late years new lights have been struck out, new roads to wealth; the old slow, though sure tract of trade, hath fallen into universal contempt; mighty fortunes have been acquired by one stroke, and as soon as acquired, the field of India appearing too confined for the display of such opulence, the possessors have changed it for the more elegant scene of Europe. Thus hath there been, by such a change of measures, a quick rise, and consequently a quick shift of servants in India. And whether such an alteration in the nature of their service may prove for the interest of their affairs there, will appear to such as are acquainted with trade. But this is but a very small part of the evil; for if the want of years and experience in their present servants may be supposed to render them less fit to discharge even the trust of the oldest, how can we imagine them equal to the new, additional, weighty charge of governing kingdoms and nations? Trade, which formerly was the  
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sole, is now become but a secondary concern of little moment. Commerce is greatly below the dignity and notice of sovereigns, and such are now the company's governors in India. Admiral Boscawen, who was dispatched by the nation in the former war with a force to attack Pondicherry, on his arrival in India in 1748, found that the servants of the company had so little interested themselves in matters out of their sphere, that they were entirely ignorant of what was done six or seven miles without the walls of their factory; for at that distance he found his march stopt by a French fort, of which none of them had ever heard before. The national war was soon after this extinguished there, but the evil effect of such extension of it to India did and does still remain. Happy had it been for this company, happy for the nation, that the neutrality offered by the French for that part of the world had been accepted by us! In such case commerce had still been at this day the sole business of Englishmen in India. But here let me do justice to the company, and obviate the odium which a step so imprudent in merchants may otherwise throw upon it. On that occasion the directors were not allowed the choice, a positive order from higher powers obliged them, though most reluctantly,

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tantly, not only to reject, but to appear themselves the rejectors of the proffered neutrality. What the superficial and temporary views of this noble statesman, who hath now washed off all his spots and blemishes by one plunge in the all-cleansing pool of patriotism, might have been, I cannot tell; the consequences, big with innumerable mischiefs have shewn that they could not be solidly good, and that he hath "opened a gate which mortal powers cannot shut again." I must beg pardon for this digression, which yet being of such importance to my subject, possibly may not appear altogether improper. Immediately after the conclusion of this war, these gentlemen, whom I mentioned to have till then so little interested themselves in affairs without, now began to extend their views. The governors for the French and English East-India companies on the coast of Coromandel, finding a body of European troops at their command and disposal, perceived that this put it in their power to acquire an influence among the unwarlike natives. With this view they began to interfere in the political government of those countries, in which they had till then peaceably traded. They stirred up competitors to form pretensions, and each supported his claimant with the whole force of his constituents. All the while

while that the mother nations were at peace in Europe, these rival governors were carrying on a very active war against one another in India, to the destruction of trade, and the misery and ruin of the wretched natives ; nor did this war end, till the demolition of the French capital left the English, lords paramount of that whole country, the princes of which depend on them for their power, and sometimes even for their subsistence.

Again, in Bengal the Nabob Sou Rajah Dowlat having in 1756, whether with or without reason is unnecessary here to mention, attacked the English, and driven them from the shore, they returned, and by force of arms deprived him of his government and life, substituting in his stead the man who had been chiefly instrumental in their success. He in return for their favours did, besides distributing amongst them all the treasure of his predecessor, and mortgaging and making over to them two of his richest provinces for the payment of a farther sum, increase the company's territory there, by the accession of large tracts of land. But he himself, with his whole country, was under their power and protection. This Nabob was supported with honour by his maker, so long as he continued in India ; but on his leaving it, the successors of this

great man finding that his Nabob was guilty of either the real or pretended crime of being poor, or in other words, that he either could not, or would not bleed any more, they changed him for one that was willing to pay them for his promotion ; and to procure the company's approbation of their conduct, got from their Nabob a (I am afraid only temporary) grant of an additional district ; so that their landed revenue in this country is now estimated at 700,000 l. sterling *per annum*. Let me observe that though this be the proper place for enlarging and being more particular in the account of these transactions, yet as such an account might possibly appear invidious, and calculated to raise, by shewing misconducts, a prejudice against this company, I shall confine myself both now and in the sequel, to a bare recital of such facts as are absolutely necessary to give a light into the present state of their affairs ; my intention being not to search for and discover past faults, but by representing things as they really are, to endeavour to remedy present, and to prevent future evils, which by concealing may become incurable. What I have said therefore, is only meant to shew the means by which this company has been changed, contrary to the intention of its institution, from a commercial, into a military corporation ; from a body of merchants

chants peaceably trading in the dominions, and under the protection of princes, into sovereigns of those very princes, whom, with their great and opulent countries, they hold in more absolute vassalage, than ever did monarch of France the meanest of his feudatories. It is also itself become proprietor of large tracts of lands, populous and rich, from which it draws kingly revenues ; it maintains its power by great and expensive armies ; it has also grand and noble fortresses, strong and capable of great defence. But we may form a general idea of the power and greatness of this mighty company, by considering, that besides its revenue in India, arising from lands, duties, contributions of princes, &c. to the amount of above one million and a half sterling *per annum*, the expence of its government there, demands almost the whole profits of its trade, or beyond one million more ; for notwithstanding this vast accession of wealth, they divide but as formerly 6 *per cent.* on the stock. And here let the reader advert, that the direction of this widely extended government, the appropriation of these mighty finances, equal to near half the revenue of Great Britain, is confided to only one not extraordinary great man, with such aids as have been already particularised. — This power and dominion of a trading company sounds extremely grand, and it must

must no doubt excite pleasure in every English breast, to think that not only the name, but the puissance of his country, has been in this glorious degree extended to the farthest corners of the earth, by its merchants. But let not this glaring show of grandeur dazzle the eye of their understanding, *latet anguis in herba*. Let not shadow engage them to forego the substance ; when they come to reflect on what they pay for all this pageantry, they will surely think it too dearly bought. By removing the object from this false and deceitful, to its true and real light, we shall find, that as this company acts only in trust for the nation, every unnecessary increase of her expence is a certain diminution of the wealth of the kingdom : It will also appear that this enormous extension of her political power and connections in India is dangerous to, and in time, if not prevented by the nation, will prove destructive of the very being and existence of that trade, the importance of which was the subject of my introduction, and to the root of which the ax seems to be already laid. To illustrate and demonstrate the first part of this assertion, I shall make use of a double theorem. In the first, rejecting and setting aside these new, accidental, temporary, and uncertain revenues in India, and supposing that the whole

whole expence of their government is defrayed by the profits arising from their trade, it must follow, that the higher their expences rise, the higher must they raise the price of their commodities in Europe ; and that the higher such price is, the larger will be the sum paid by the nation to the company for that part which she consumes at home, and the smaller will be the gain on that part which she exports to other countries ; seeing that the merchant exporting must put up with a smaller profit on his goods, than if he bought them cheaper ; for it must be observed, that although this company are the sole venders of these commodities in England, yet the English are not the sole merchants of them in Europe, in Africa, nor even in America. It must be then granted that the price of East-India goods will always be regulated by the expence of that company, and that the cheaper such goods are sold in England, the greater benefit arises to the nation from this trade, and so *vice versa*. On this principle it would be evidently more for the interest of this kingdom, if they could carry on their trade in India by pedlars living in huts and hovels, on the cheapest fare, than by mighty governors, dwelling in palaces, and at the head of numerous armies ; because so much expence as they save in India, so much doth  
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the nation save in her expence for East-Indian commodities, and so much more clear gain doth she receive from those countries to which she trades in those goods. In this case, and almost in this alone, I may say that the interest of the company, or rather of its managers, appears to be distinct from, not to say opposite to that of the nation; and this seems to be the greatest, and almost the only grievance arising from the being of such a company, inasmuch as by virtue of the exclusive charter, the directors are put into the power of obliging the nation to reimburse them whatever expence they may chuse by any schemes to run themselves into; and also to extort from her, without her choice, a concurrence in all their measures, whether right or wrong. The sense of the nation being thus liable to be arbitrarily taxed by one man, much under the degree of a first lord of the Treasury, or of a secretary of state, cannot miss of raising disdain in the minds of a people ever fond of liberty. By the second part of my proposition I shall shew that every unnecessary expence of even the company's revenues in India is also a diminution of the wealth of this kingdom. This will no doubt appear something extraordinary to the company, who do not look upon themselves as at all accountable for the manner of disposing of that,

that, which they will say is their own property, acquired at their own expence, and by the success of their arms.

I shall only *en passant* take notice, that these acquisitions were not made at their expence alone, but also at that of the nation, without whose interposition with her fleets and armies, even in their broils with the country powers, they would, instead of their present puissance and wealth, not have possessed a single spot of ground in these countries. But waving this anecdote as not needed, I say that as all deficiencies of this revenue towards the expence of their government must be supplied from their trade, or, in consequence of what I proved in my former theorem, must be levied on, and supplied by the nation; therefore whatever unnecessary expence of their revenue may be made by the company, or its managers, the burthen of such expence must in the end fall upon the good people of England. Farther, supposing that these revenues could with good management do more than support the whole necessary expence of their government, and that there might be a saving; it is evident that such saving must, altho' through the channel of this company, become an accession to the wealth of the nation. I have on this occasion confined myself as much as the sub-

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ject would permit me, but hope that I have made good what I proposed, and that it now appears that the company can have no property distinct from the nation, and also that they are responsible to her for the disposal of what they call their own finances.

I have likewise advanced, that the enormous extension of the company's political power and connection in India, was dangerous to and in time will prove destructive of that trade. If we argue from general, though just maxims, it may be said, that the ruin of all empires and governments hath arisen from an enlargement of the superstructure beyond what the basis could bear. And that the company can assume or acquire no power but by depriving some one of that power, who it may be presumed, however awed at present into silence, will not part with his possession without reluctance, and who when freed from the impending awe, will not miss any opportunity of recovering his own, as well as of avenging the injury on the head of the usurper. Such usurpation of other peoples right, must likewise stir up the envy of our neighbours, who were formerly upon a good footing with us; our example will induce them to make use of the same means to dispoil us, which we made use of to dispoil others. These rules will serve and stand good in all cases. In this

now before us let us examine into the particular danger, to which we may be exposed in our several settlements in India; and first in Bengal, which deservedly claims the preference, as being infinitely more valuable than all the others, of which it may be called the parent; and of which if ever we happen to be deprived, we have little more business in India: And here there are three different quarters, from which we have reason to apprehend danger, first from the natives themselves, next from our European brethren, and lastly, which is the most dangerous, from both united. As to the natives themselves, we are taught to entertain the most contemptible opinion of them, as of a weak, effeminate, dastardly people: the great success of colonel now lord Clive, who with a mere handful of men defeated the whole power of that country, and almost changed the face of their government, hath conveyed to us the meanest ideas of the military force of that part of the world. But it is dangerous to form our judgment of even small matters, upon one or two particular incidents, without informing ourselves of circumstances. To enforce this I shall produce an example from our own history, in the reign of king John; supposing that it had been reported to a people equally unacquainted with the real

strength of England, as the generality of my countrymen are with that of Bengal, that Lewis dauphin of France landing in this island with a very small body of troops, had rendered himself master of the metropolis, and almost of the whole kingdom, obliging the monarch to seek for security on the even then contemned protection of the see of Rome, to which he surrendered his crown. I say, this reported without other circumstances to a people uninformed, would naturally impress on them as contemptible tho' as false a notion of the power of England, as the exploits of colonel Clive do give us of that of Bengal; that we may not therefore be misled in this case, let us examine into it with all its circumstances. When colonel Clive attacked and defeated the Sou Rajah Dowlat, the natives had never before even seen a European force in the field; their large armies, maintained for parade, had never served but to repel the light incursions of their equally unwarlike neighbours. The then prince was hated and dreaded by all his subjects, more particularly by such as were nearest his person, they being continually subjected to the grossest insults, and even in apprehension of their lives, to secure which they were ready to join the first enemy that should appear. Now what could be more opportune for such a

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purpose, than this body of English, a people they had ever looked upon as peaceable merchants, and who they imagined had returned only to resettle that commerce, from which they had been expelled by their tyrant? Thus colonel Clive might find it no difficult matter to form a party against this prince in his own court and army; this he did, and with a most consummate address reaped all the advantages from it that such a favourable circumstance could afford. The detested Nabob being devoted to destruction by those he trusted, fell an easy conquest, when by the counsel of his secretly revolted ministers he came to an engagement; unluckily for him, his only faithful general was killed by a cannon ball in the very beginning of the action, and one half of his army either fled off towards the enemy, or shewed that they had no intention to fight for him; while the other half, intimidated and suspecting one another, dispersed almost of themselves. Thus the Nabob finding himself betrayed by those in whom he reposed the greatest confidence, fled, but being overtaken, was slain by the son of him who was designed to fill his place. That the English did not only preserve but even extend their influence under the new Nabob, can be accounted for without ascribing it either to their own irresistible

ble force, or to the pusillanimity of the natives. This Nabob raised by them to a government quite unsettled, had great occasion for the continuation of their aid, not only to confirm his power amongst his own subjects, but to repel the invasions which were soon made on his dominions from without. We ought not therefore to be surprized that the English interest, thus cherished by the prince of the country, did flourish under the conduct of colonel Clive, a person of quick penetration, profound judgment, and great resolution, whose genius seemed to be more particularly calculated for the meridian of those countries, where he was adored as a superior being, and where his very name was equal to numerous armies. Whilst this aid was thus necessary to the Nabob, no wonder he caressed his useful supporters; but when it became less so, even, he himself began to shew that he regretted the loss of what he had lavished away in the first transports of his gratitude, and that he would have been glad to re-assume at least his independence. He was not unacquainted with the designs of the Dutch, and it is well known that he would not have been sorry to have seen an European force introduced into his dominions, which might prove a check on the power of those who he saw were likely to become  
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his masters instead of his allies. However, the deep respect and awe he had of Col. CLIVE prevented his acting openly on this occasion. The superiority of this extraordinary genius predominated so far over that of the Nabob, that when he quitted India, he left this prince in such a state of dependence, and the affairs of the English in such an exalted and powerful situation, that even the *Kites* and *Owls* that followed had it in their power to gorge themselves with that prey, which being beat down, was at the mercy of, though spared by, this generous Eagle. They were enabled to subvert the constitution of that government, to the support of which in the person of Meyer Jasseir Alli Cawn, the faith of this nation, and of the East-India company, had been plighted by Admiral Watson, Lord Clive, and the other gentlemen in highest trust. Having thus, by ascribing to their proper and true causes, accounted for the great conquests of Lord Clive, with the mighty influence which the English gained there under his auspices, I shall next give a more just idea of the real strength of this country, and what we have to apprehend from it. As to what is called the sinews of war, *Money*, we are well satisfied, that notwithstanding the alienations made to the English,

English, there is no want of that, the revenues of this Nabob's government alone being calculated at three millions and a half. He is also lord of all the property of this rich kingdom. Where money is, and also properly applied, men, and brave men (even if the country itself does not afford them) will never be wanting. The Pitans, a race of bold and hardy mountaineers to the northward of his dominions, do, Swifs like, hire out their valiant sons to war. Of these the Nabobs generally entertain a number in their pay, and it is not at all extraordinary for them to bring into the field 80,000 men. But why should we entertain such a mean opinion of his own troops? The English themselves have and do now employ the natives of his countries in their service; and they have experienced that they are far from being void of courage. We have besides seen there instances in individuals of as high resolution as others can boast of. The truth is, that this dispersed valour has not hitherto been collected by discipline and military skill. That discipline which renders a small party equal to the whole force of numerous nations, was never yet acquired by any people at once, or in the short space of one year.

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But this useful knowledge we have been communicating to them for eight years past, at the first undesignedly; the armies of the Nabob marching for four or five years in conjunction with ours, could not miss of receiving some impressions. Those natives also, who, by being in our service, have been instructed, trained, and exercised with the same art and care as our own troops, and who have likewise fought bravely on several occasions, in our cause, and under our inspection, are subjects of this same Nabob. And I find, that within these three years or more, we have been particularly industrious and attentive to marshalling the army of our favourite Nabob, I mean, Cassin Alli Can, and that he hath been supplied with English officers proper for that purpose. I am further informed, that the seapoys in our service have been more than usually frequent in demanding their discharges, which without hesitation has been granted them; and I scarcely think that they will leave their skill with their English muskets, or that when entered into the service of their prince, they will immediately return to their primitive rawness. The use of artillery, a science in high perfection amongst the Europeans, and so material in deciding battles, was also next to unknown by these natives, when colonel Clive came

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amongst them. Although they were not entirely ignorant of a sort of construction of guns, yet were they surprizingly rude and awkward in the use of them: but this also is to be learnt and acquired from proper teachers, and even if they have not gunners of their own, the Europeans settled amongst them will be always able to supply them. Therefore we must expect to behold these natives, soon, if not already, a very different people from what Col. Clive found them.

And now let us see in what predicament we stand with these natives, the strength and force of whom I have thus represented.— Ever since the English re-entered Bengal by force, the peace of that country has been continually and most thoroughly embroiled. Their bloody disputes with Sou Raja Dowla, their attack of the French, their broils with the Dutch, the unaccountable protracted war with Sha Zadah, together with the more than usually violent incursions of the Morattoes, have rendered that kingdom a continued scene of war, where ever, till then (excepting at times, a light incursion of these Morattoes made by them, in order to quicken the payment of their Choult) peace had reigned without interruption. And now they are engaged in troubles of a still more bloody nature, and big with greatly more fatal consequences;  
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the seeds of a civil war sown by our hands alone, will produce a most plentiful harvest of blood, slaughter, famine and destruction to these countries. Where the manufacturer, where the labourer used to rise undisturbed and unknowing of fear, there at present is heard nought but the sound of the trumpet, and the dreadful alarms of war. That country, late so famous for commerce, whose rich manufactures brought to it immense wealth from every quarter of the tributary world, and whose fertile plains supplied millions of its neighbours with grain, is unable now to yield itself the bare necessities of life. The loom is unemployed, neglected lies the plough ; trade is at a stand, for there are no manufacturers to carry it on. The English capital, which must be supposed the last that would be affected by it, now feels the misery of dearth, numbers perishing there for want of food : What then must the wretched natives in other parts suffer ? This account is not exaggerated, but founded on a letter, written by such of the company's servants in India, as dissented from the proceedings of their colleagues, to the directors in Europe. But even this, tho' heavy, is but a part of the misery, that this harmless oppressed people have and do suffer more immediately from the English. They have

seen their fundamental laws and customs subverted, the persons of their princes most grossly insulted, the whole frame of their government prostituted to the lawless insolent lust of rapacious foreigners. The wantonness of power, vested in even young raw boys, hath trampled on the dignity of their most respectable personages. In a government thus unhinged, thus harrassed, what must the unhappy subjects feel ; without protection, without order, nothing prevailing but anarchy, confusion and despair? Can we suppose these sufferers men, can we look upon them as rational beings, and at the same time believe that they entertain no resentment against the authors of this accumulated war and misery ; against the changers of their quiet and tranquil state, into the present wretched and truly deplorable condition? And can a nation blest themselves, and truly sensible of the happiness of a regular and well established government, remain insensible to the inexpressible anguish of their fellow-creatures? — But in what light must their present and future princes regard us? Meer Jasseir Alli Cawn, the first Nabob made by us, could not help looking on us with an evil eye. Having, as I had occasion to mention before, been vested by us in a government to which he otherwise had no pretension, he had improvidently given

given away, what, when cool, he could not help regretting the loss of: besides his grants of money and lands, he had parted with the splendour and independence of his predecessors; and notwithstanding his Maker did support him in these points as much as circumstances would permit, yet could not he prevent this poor prince from being obliged to swallow many a bitter pill. After the departure of Colonel Clive, the delicacy that he had used towards him was entirely thrown aside. His successor in the government, who had been particularly instrumental in bringing down Sou Rajah Dowla, and consequently in occasioning the first revolution in Bengal, had arrived at his new dignity contrary to the intention of his constituents, and entirely through the accident of a number of his seniors going home at this time in disgust. Being blest with a genius uncommonly fertile in expedients for raising money, and further unclogged by those silly notions of punctilio, which often stand in the way betwixt some people and fortune, he had projected and put in practice several inferior manœuvres; but this *Chef d'Oeuvre*, this master scheme, though formed almost as soon as he came to power, time did not allow him to have the honour of executing. Being formed however, we may imagine, that under such a governor, daily mortifications,

tions, and in various shapes, were not wanting to this ill-starred Nabob. The prince who depends on the will of a superior, ungenerous and incapable of humane or delicate sentiments, is in a more mean and wretched state, than he who depends on a common prostitute for his daily food. Our Nabob quickly found himself reduced to less than the name of prince, insulted by the most contemptuous flights of those whom he called his allies, and who, to pave the way to the projected change, embroiled his affairs, and used all other means in their power to render him odious; despised, reviled, and cursed even to his face by his own subjects, who laid to his charge all the miseries they suffered by war, all the hardships and injuries to which they had been subjected by foreigners, into whose hands he had resigned the substance, on condition he might enjoy the shadow of government; his very domesticks treated him with contempt and neglect. His son, who had acted as his general, was suddenly taken from him. This active young prince in the midst of his own, and the English camp, was most singularly struck by lightning. About four months after the departure of colonel Clive, a gentleman from Madrafs arrived at Calcutta, to take upon him, by order of the directors, the government of their affairs in Bengal. It must

must here again be acknowledged, that the gentlemen in the direction, showed they had so little intention, that the accidental governor should have ever come to that trust, that they now removed him to be the seventh in council. Being endued however in a very high degree with what in some is called address, enforced by a great share of plausibility in argument, he found these talents of singular use to him on this occasion. His grand plan being now almost ripe for execution, could not be concealed from his successor. He wavered some days about continuing in the service of his masters in that degraded rank. During this space it may be imagined, that he was employed in using his influence to prevail on the new governor, who was a stranger there, to adopt his views. At last this person, who had been hitherto but slightly esteemed by his successor, was by him taken into the most intimate favour and confidence, and admitted into the secret committee, which is composed of a few select members of the council there. This was but a bad omen for the unfortunate Nabob, as from this very symptom we may conclude, that the scheme and measures of the former, were now embraced by the present governor. But it does not redound much to the honour of this degraded governor, nor plead greatly in favour of the disinterestedness

interestedness of his views, that after such a stigma, such a mark put upon him by his superiors, he could, (though during his short government he had acquired a handsome fortune) submit to serve them in the seventh place, after having been in the first. However, he had the spirit to remain in it no longer, than till he had fairly packed off the then governor on the execution of his plan, and on that very day he resigned. I should not have dwelt so particularly on these seemingly trifling incidents, nor should I have descended so low, as to touch individuals, had not I found it absolutely necessary towards drawing one material inference, which is, that this scheme of Nabob changing, borrows no lustre from the character of its original projector. We may thence imagine, that this much injured prince remained in little better circumstances than those we mentioned, from the time of the arrival of the new governor, till that of the catastrophe of the piece, his deposition, the circumstances of which, though extremely affecting, are yet too tedious and unnecessary to my purpose to be repeated here, suffice it then to say, that the action itself was executed in a "clandestine and treacherous" manner. The persons concerned in this transaction have taken upon them to give some reasons for their conduct, but besides that

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most of these are said to be false, there is not one of them can carry any weight with an unprejudiced and tolerably informed examiner. For not to enter into particulars, this prince was independent of the English, having been acknowledged as such in the most formal manner by those very English, who had also in their treaties with him solemnly engaged to support him with their whole power against all his enemies. How could they then who had thus sworn, and who had not the smallest pretext of authority, saving that of present force, to call him to any account for his actions, presume, in violation of these oaths, to deprive him of his dignity, and to bestow it on another? The only shadow of excuse given is, that it was for the interest of their masters, and whether it was really so or not, time will show; but whatever weight this argument may have with the company, it can have but little with the rest of mankind, who will scarcely admit, that a present view of advantage, can absolve from the bond of oaths and treaties. And it will be found very difficult to persuade any man of common discernment, that even this wretched excuse of the company's interest was their motive to that shameful step. By the letter which I have before-mentioned, these depoters acknowledge the promise of twenty

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lacks of rupees (240,000 l. sterling) as a gratuity for their trouble in this arduous affair. But this is not the only honourable feat that we have performed on this occasion ; we have delivered up to this well-paying Nabob, all such of the natives as had adhered to the English interest, and had been so remarkably serviceable to Col. Clive. These, one would imagine, merited our protection ; but instead of it they were all, and among them the Nabob of Patna thrown into the scale, and immediately on being delivered, were by this our faithful ally put to the torture, that they might discover their treasure, and after that, for the crime of attachment to the English, put to a cruel death. These were the chief exploits of this nature that we had the power of performing, and such baseness, must, without doubt, render the faith of the English nation, as respectable in these countries, as was the *punica fides* amongst the Romans. What trust, what confidence can these people, or any of their future princes repose, in such as make so light of honour and oaths. But this our friend, this purchaser of his father-in-law's right, hath shown at least his judgment in his opinion of us, for soon after his promotion, he quitted the capital of his country, where his predecessors had ever resided, removing to the most northern part of his dominions,

minions, as being the most distant from his dangerous friends, wisely concluding, that whilst he remained within their reach, his dignity was no longer secure, than till a proper person was found to bid for it. He then issued forth orders for all his subjects to quit the southern parts of the country, and soon after began to interrupt and stop our commerce. At last, in a very proper season of the year he commenced hostilities, by seizing our factories, and murdering even the ambassadors who had been sent to treat with him; whose persons have ever been sacred amongst the most barbarous nations. But what faith is to be observed with a people, who are themselves void of it? And now we are thoroughly engaged in a war with him; from which, at present, we have this chance of extricating ourselves; that as he was an usurper, and displeasing to many of those whom we ourselves obliged to be his subjects, the deposed Nabob, whom we have now again acknowledged, may possibly be able to form a party in his favour. If we act unanimously, if we are vigorous, and assemble all the force that can be collected, and strike a quick and sudden blow, the war may be at once quashed for this time. But if by disjointed counsels it be protracted, till the other Europeans settled there, can draw together a force to join our

usurping Nabob, it is most probable, that on this occasion we shall receive our *Coup de Grace*. In the mean time, these countries are useless to us, trade and agriculture being entirely stopped, what revenues can we draw from them, or what profit on commerce? We shall this year have a few goods: three ships dispatched from thence last year lost their passage and put back, their cargoes will arrive this year. But excepting these, and the few goods which may have been provided before the open rupture, where are we to look for more, until matters are settled, a probably very distant prospect? But whatever issue this present war may have, we may see what the force of the country, united under an active prince, with sober counsels, and a tolerable administration of the finances is capable of, even without the aid of any of the Europeans settled there. And when that once becomes the case, we may also see what we have reason to expect from them.

But the Dutch are settled in these countries as well as we; they have beheld with an envious eye our mighty power, privileges and possessions there; to which they think we have no other right, than that of having been the first who had the good fortune to grasp at it, and which title they imagine ought to stand good no longer than till a  
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superior force can wrest it from us. They lately made a most vigorous and well-designed effort to this end. The season seemed also favourable; when we were over-matched on the coast of Coromondel, our capital there being then threatened, and soon after invested by the French: when the greatest, and a chosen part of our troops had been detached from Calcutta on a necessary expedition to the coast of Golconda, while there remained behind little more than two hundred Europeans: at such a season arrived in the river of Bengal seven Dutch ships with six hundred Europeans, and a greater number of Indian soldiers on board. So far this plan seemed to be extremely well timed; but unluckily for them, the management of the English affairs was then in the hands of Colonel Clive, and whether it was owing to the superior address of our governor in frustrating this scheme; or whether it might be owing to the incapacity of the Dutch themselves, or perhaps to both these causes, this promising and seemingly easy enterprize, was by them executed in a most bungling manner. Our penetrating chief saw at once into the end of their views, and also their pretence for bringing these troops into the river; he well knew the consequence of admitting them into the heart of the country; and he as quickly formed

formed his own plan of conduct. Though, far from receiving assistance or even countenance from the Nabob, though instead of being aided by the advice, he was harrassed by the fears and remonstrances of his counsellors, yet he remained firm and steady, and so serene, that his courage at last communicated itself to the dejected inhabitants. By the awe of his name he kept the Nabob from interposing, or even declaring his inclinations, which he certainly would have done under any other governor less respected by him. Fortunately also Colonel Ford, a gallant officer, having quitted his command at Massulipatram, arrived at Calcutta to ease our governor of some part of his burthen; he, at the earnest entreaty of Colonel Clive, took upon him, though as a volunteer, the command of the few soldiers. On the disembarkation of the Dutch troops, he was sent up the river to prevent a junction of their garrison with that corps; he soon met with and dispersed the garrison, and next day attacked the other body fatigued with a long march; over which he gained a most complete victory, and by it the Dutch factory, as they at that time humbly acknowledged, lay at his mercy. Thus was this attempt frustrated by the extraordinary vigorous and prudent conduct of the then governor; I say extraordinary, because though  
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the gentlemen in his council at that time, were equal to any of those who have been, either before or since, or who are likely in future to be employed by this company ; yet I appeal to those very gentlemen, even now when the danger is over, whether they or any one of them would have presumed, in the situation they were then in, to have even attempted what this nobleman so fortunately executed. Yet one of these, the most particularly clamorous at that time, hath since formed and carried into execution an enterprize which Colonel Clive would have shuddered to think of. But although we have reason to rejoice that our enemies were on this occasion disappointed, yet unless we retain there such governors as he was, we cannot from hence conclude, that we shall always be as successful. Our very neighbours too will grow wiser by experience ; their troops, on that occasion, were thinly and badly officered ; but we find they are resolved to trust no longer to the *Heeren Van Batavia*, ragamuffin cobblers and tailors. They have now sent out hardy veterans, such as have seen blood in the Prussian and Austrian services. Other circumstances too are greatly changed in their favour ; the English are at present fully employed in a war with at least one, and he the most powerful of the two princes ; who being in possession

possession of the country, at the head of an army of a different mould from these of the former Nabobs, has likewise shown by the steps he has taken, that he neither expects nor desires peace with us. He will now remove all difficulties of introducing their troops into those countries; and what even a small body of Europeans joined to his army may do is needless to explain. As to the French they are out of the question, as being supposed to have no force there; yet in this we may be deceived. Some will aver, that we ought to put confidence in the generosity of our European brethren, who certainly will not take the advantage of our distresses, and that things may yet go well; I hope, however, we shall never be reduced to trust to that, as we have already experienced the sincerity of their friendship in these very countries. Yet how can we, should they even do all this, accuse them of acting ungenerously? In a country altogether independent of either us or them, two princes are in dispute about the succession, they each have an equal title, the grant and investiture of the English, if we are at this present in the humour to think that our first choice gives a better right than our second, they no doubt will imagine that they are at liberty to chuse whether they shall think as we do or not; if they should chance  
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to differ from us, they will say that they ought in equity to be allowed to support their opinion with the same arguments as we support ours.—How the Dutch may act I cannot promise; but the French and English were accustomed in such like disputes to deal very genteely by each other. They used each to choose their side, neither as principals; they met in the field, under the banners of their distinct dependent; there they engaged, and slaughtered one another as much as they could, but still in a friendly manner, because there was peace betwixt the mother countries in Europe. Nay on this occasion these our brethren can account for such conduct, by arguments that must appear equitable even to ourselves; for if we do thus through wantonness of power take upon us on every lucrative view to change the prince, and by this embroil the peace of the country where they are settled with the same right as we to trade, can we expect that for such reason they are to lose their commerce, and be obliged to put themselves to the charge of maintaining expensive factories, which through our means shall become useless? No (will they say) let the common disturbers be ejected as foes to mankind and to the peace of society: But as I observed before, this present war may by unanimity in counsel, by vi-

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gorous measures, and a proper use of the other circumstances in our favour, be quashed and happily ended. However, if that should happen to be the case this time, yet while the causes remain, the effects will probably, nay inevitably be the same. But should things take an adverse turn, and we in consequence be ejected from Bengal, let us not flatter ourselves with the hopes of an easy return there, for this reason, that we have seen the French who had been expelled, so readily re-admitted into these countries. Circumstances greatly alter the case betwixt us and the French. They were expelled from thence by the English in their proper character, during a national war; therefore they had to obtain the consent of the English alone for their return. But should the English be ejected, it will be not only with the concurrence, but in the name of the prince of the country, whose consent we must have to come back; and what difficulties may occur in procuring that, contrary to the interest of other, no doubt then powerful and intriguing Europeans, will too evidently appear. In the case of the French, they had never acted in these countries but as merchants, the natives would therefore be far from sorry to see such come again amongst them. But how the English have acted there has been described,

scribed, and let the lion's claws be pared ever so close, there will still be constant apprehensions of their growing again. Then that mighty fort, which with a proper garrison, with ammunition of war, provisions, and tolerable conduct, bids defiance to all the powers of India, and to all the forces that can be transported from Europe to that part of the world, falling through a defect in all these points, into the hands of more provident enemies, will for ever forbid our return to those countries without their leave, and on their own terms. As to our other settlements on the coast of Coromandel, &c. they are scarce worth mentioning after the other. However, if the French have an eye that way, there is the old field open, a competition for the Carnatic Nabobship.—They have no settlements there? Let them find but men, it is an open coast, there are many towns, their partizan will grant them a title to settlements, which will be equally as valid with them as our Nabob's can be with us; the longest sword will decide the cause.

Before I proceed farther, let me obviate a prejudice which may be started in the minds of some of my readers, by the warmth I may have expressed in handling two opposite characters in the preceding narration. I mean the praise I have bestowed on virtue,

and the abhorrence of vice. Praise is at present so common, while at the same time merit is so rare, that the just subject of praise being next to lost, the meaning of that term is likewise almost become extinct, or at least synonymous with flattery. Yet where there is real merit, praise surely is the smallest tribute we can pay it. My subject will stand the test, a candid examination will not only free me from the imputation of flattery, but will even make it appear that I have rather bestowed my encomiums with a scanty hand. As to the contrast, who can blame me for pulling off the cloak of virtue from the foul and deformed body of vice? I have in the preceding part shewn the mighty value of this trade to England; as also the dreadful consequences arising to her, from its becoming an addition to the commerce of her neighbours. I have likewise given the outlines of the nature of this company, and the capacities of those who are entrusted with this important charge; and by a genuine and just account of the situation of affairs in Bengal, I have exposed to view the grounds we may have to apprehend either a present or future loss of that which is the only valuable settlement; and from which when thrown out, we may be for ever after most easily excluded. As to the

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fundamental principles and facts \* on which I have argued, let who will disprove them; if no one, and indeed no one can, let my countrymen then stand judges of the justice of my conclusions; and if they are allowed by them to be just, I doubt not but they will with me conclude, that a subject of so much consequence to this nation, being thus involved in difficulties, and in such imminent danger of being wrested from our hands for ever, demands the care and skill of more and abler heads than of those to whom they are entrusted, and who are so far from having the power and capacity of extricating themselves from their present embarrassment, that it is to be feared they will, by irresolute and divided counsels, entangle their affairs to that degree, as to render it in time impossible for even the power and wisdom of this kingdom to clear them. I speak not this with the view of exposing to contempt the weakness or inability of the company *in its accepted sense*; no! my design is only to expose what they selfishly, and through a mean and false pride, have hitherto concealed. Power is naturally agreeable to all, we are all loth to declare our defects and failings; we are most of us

\* As to the conduct of particulars mentioned here, they are detached from and independent of the main subject.

us so prejudiced in favour of our own abilities, that if we are capable of conducting an enterprize in any shape, we immediately think no one could have conducted it better. This accounts in some measure for what would otherwise be inexcuseable in these gentlemen, who in justice to their country ought to have declared some time ago, that the mighty extent of their concerns, beyond what it was when they received their last charter, had rendered their powers as well as their stock greatly unequal to the charge. With respect to their own personal abilities, any mention of them would have been too mortifying a declaration to be expected from themselves, yet would that have occur'd as a very natural consequent of the other; and one would be almost induced to suspect that the fear of discovering that consequence has so long smothered the former. It is evident that in order to preserve the existence of any *Being*, the means of its support ought to be proportioned to its demands and natural wants. This nation therefore ought to be most particularly watchful over the growth of this company's concerns, and to be most minutely careful in proportioning every increase of such weight and influence, to an increase of power and of stock, as also of the abilities and even *Rank* of such

as are chosen to be intrusted with the conduct of this increased charge ; without such addition the thing must droop, dwindle and die. When I mention an increase of power, I ought not to be understood as meaning an increase of the power of the 24 directors, such as they are at present, and who are commonly understood to mean the company ; they have already more than they are capable of using properly. But let us not be suspiciously cautious of augmenting the power and privileges of this company, provided it is returned to and kept, as nearly as circumstances will permit, in the spirit of its original institution ; which institution I understand to have have been as follows.

In the reign of queen Elizabeth, the merchants of England first trading to the East-Indies, were by that wise princess incorporated and formed into a company, for this end and with this view, that the stocks, counsels, and interests of many being joined, that trade might by this united force, be driven to a greater extent, the losses be more easily sustained and repaired, and the great confusion and other numberless disadvantages arising from an opposition and rivalry of many distinct and separate interests be evaded and shunned. For the farther encouragement and cherishing this then infant trade and company, she likewise endowed it with  
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many privileges, and even with an exclusive right, which while this trade remained thus in its infancy and confined in point of stock, might be deemed a monopoly ; but seeing it is now so immensely increased as to demand such a large stock to carry it on, if the word monopoly may be still preserved, it ought not in justice to be applied to the company *in its true sense*, seeing every man that pleases may be admitted into the stock : though at the same time, as we shall hereafter show, it may in another sense, still merit the title.

The princes who succeeded that great queen, together with the other branches of the legislature, so low down as William the third, were so sensible of the justness of these wise and well weighed reasons, which induced her to establish this trade on such a footing, that ever since, on the application of that company, they always most readily renewed their charter, and also as there was occasion increased their privileges. In the sense that I have here mentioned, the incorporation of this company may be termed a collecting and assembling of several different little springs and rills into one bed or channel, the bounds and banks of which are its exclusive charter. These several springs then, which if allowed to diffuse and disperse in their natural courses, would have lost themselves almost at their sources, being

now collected and confined in one bed, do thus form a mighty river rolling along, and with its torrent sweeping all before it, as scorning the resistance of smaller stops and lets. Therefore if the nation either increases its force or enlarges and widens its banks, she only strengthens thereby the work of her own hands. This metaphor I think may convey a pretty just idea of the light in which this company and its charter have been looked upon, by the princes and parliaments of this nation, so far down as the reign of William the third. But in that reign, we have reason to imagine that the nature and constitution of the company was changed, for we find that at this time, in order to the obtaining a renewal of their charter, they were obliged to make use of clandestine means, and to bribe very high, as to the shame of many then in power, was discovered by the great activity of the house of commons; and ever since, the renewal of their charter, hath met with great opposition, so as that at last in the year 1698, a charter was granted to a new company, on their undertaking to lend the government a larger sum of money than the old one could pretend to do; yet, through certain means, the old one still retained its charter; though it was afterwards found necessary to the good and even the existence of each, that both

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should

should coalesce and unite, and from this union they take the title of *United, &c.* It may be expected and even be worth the pains, that we should account for and explain the manner of this alteration which we have mentioned, of the original nature and constitution of this company. Of this we shall give a cursory view, and no more than is absolutely necessary to the present purpose. If it should be found from these hints, that a more full account of these and other such matters will be agreeable to any of my countrymen, I shall be ever ready to communicate any little light that I may have acquired of this interesting subject. At the first institution of this company it may be supposed, that the members or proprietors were but few, and those merchants; who though they might depute some few of their own body, to attend to the more immediate dispatch of the business of the joint concern, yet as being but few, and also merchants, every proprietor in such character, would no doubt at a general meeting or court, avail himself of his privilege, to enquire into and make himself acquainted with the most private and secret transactions of the trade.

But when this trade became so extensive, and required such a sum of money to carry it on, as obliged the nation to prescribe limits to their stock, then also the proprietors be-

became very numerous, for none being refused, men, women, children, and foreigners of all nations were admitted. It is well known that in every branch of trade there are secrets, which are not proper to be communicated, seeing that such communication would be of particular prejudice to the skilful trader. In this mighty branch there are no doubt secrets, which, as many of the proprietors are foreigners, might in consequence of their being known by such, and their withdrawing their property from our to the Dutch or other East-India stocks, be by them made use of to the irreparable loss of our company. For this reason it became on such occasion necessary, that the secrets of the company should be withdrawn from the sight of the whole, and be confided only to a few who are their directors. Thus began to arise that mighty difference and alteration, from the original intent and constitution of this company. On the commencement of stock-jobbing the company amongst others also, lent our government, at three different times, to the amount of 4,200,000*l.* sterling, and by this means their stock and concerns have mightily increased; and besides the other evil consequences of this jobbing scheme, it has also so thoroughly thrown the affairs of the company into the hands of the directors, that they are now become almost

(even properly speaking) themselves the East-India company. This power and charge of trust rests in a body of about 50 or 60 personages of no very extraordinary abilities, who go in and out by rotation, or by a change of interests, for as I before observed 24 of these do for the time being form this direction. This will also account for what must otherwise appear an absurdity, I mean the mighty struggles made, and the large sums of late expended for the grant of a new charter; for supposing the proprietors of the India stock to form the East-India company, what can be more absurd than to think that this company would part with 200,000*l.* at a time, for that which to them does not value a rush? this may also be cleared up by the following observation, in which, however, if I am mistaken, I shall submit. When I (and I imagine my case is the same with that of others) choose to take 500 or 1000*l.* in this company's stock, I go to market, I give the current price for it, I have a transfer and thus become a proprietor; but this stock I do not buy for this reason, that it is more beneficial than any other stock, no; I have my 6 *per Cent.* for my 150*l.* or 4 *per Cent.* for my 100, at least nearly in the same manner as the other funds; and for the matter of security, this stock is so much connected with, and dependent on the publick funds,

funds, that it is not only liable to all the risks of any of them, but is also subject to its own particular dangers. My reasons then for making myself a proprietor arise not from the views of superior benefit on my money, but perhaps, because I choose to have a compliment paid me once a year by the candidates for the direction, and possibly I may expect in return some small favour for a young relation, &c. nay even whim may induce me. At any rate, in regard to my money, I look for my dividend at the stated times, while that's paid me I interfere not with secrets, which I can neither come at, nor do they at all import me as a proprietor, seeing if I am any ways apprehensive, I can carry my concern again to market. If this is, and I am pretty clear it is nearly the case of all proprietors, saving the number of those whom I excepted, is it to be imagined that they would part with a shilling, for the continuation of that from which they reap not one farthing extraordinary benefit? But taking the company in its other sense, as composed of, or which is the same, implicitly guided by its directors; it may appear to be very well worth the while of these few gentlemen to pay a very large sum for the continuation of their power and influence, seeing that a very small part of the sum comes out of their pockets; and that the fluctuating body of proprietors  
rest

rest supine, and while they receive their expected dividend *care for none of those things*. By reflecting, and considering what hath been said, we shall also be able to discover another secret, which is, the despotick power acquired, and the cruel tyranny exercised by this small company or directorial body, over that large unweildy pithless one, the proprietors, who being thus indifferent, without a head, divided, without concerted measures, counsel or rule, put it in the power of those few to keep them in the most *cimmerian* darkness with respect to their own affairs. For if at any time a few of these proprietors should impertinently presume to pry into the abstruse mysteries of their own business, the dictators are ever ready with the dreadful fulmination of throwing up their charge; and the fear of that anarchy which must necessarily be the consequence of such a sudden resignation, will ever serve effectually to charm into silence the majority of a general court, who, provided they receive their dividend, care not who has the payment of it. Thus the proprietors have it but little in their power, either to prevent or rectify any misconduct of their directors. I have been forced, for the sake of perspicuity, greatly to exceed my first proposed limits, but clearness being so necessary in all subjects, this prolixity will I hope be excused by my reader. And  
if

if in this account, there should any thing appear disagreeable to the company, let this plead with them, that no sore can be cured without probing and laying it open. Half the business of a physician is to discover the nature of the malady; that being known, the medicine may be prescribed with greater safety, and greater view of success; and if I may be allowed to take upon me the character of a prober, I shall, seeing I am about it, go a little deeper, and let out some more of the pus, formed from the confinement of the power of this East-India company to this small number. In the first place, this confined company, when upon any occasion, they are brought into distress, and have need of the assistance or interposition of the nation, do either, but particularly, if it arises from any evident misconduct of their own, or of their favourites employed by them, carefully conceal or diminish it, or else when obliged, in a cringing way apply to the minister, begging his mightiness will be graciously pleased to assist the poor distressed 24 directors; and this he will do or not do as suits his humour or convenience.

Whereas the true *English East-India company*, a body of merchants the most respectable, grand and powerful of any in this world, ought never to have any want,

ought never to stand in need of any help, but when they can avow it and account for it; and in such case they ought, as a set of men entrusted by the nation with one of her highest concerns, to apply with boldness, I do not mean licentiousness, to the proper powers for their aid. I allow this company may no doubt have secrets which cannot be properly communicated to foreigners, to fools, or to knaves; but they cannot, at least they ought not, to have any that may not be communicated to persons deputed either by the legislature, or even the body of proprietors, to inspect the state of their affairs; for there are no doubt men to be found in this nation, as tender of the interests of their country, and consequently of that of the company, as the 24 directors. Another disadvantage arising from the confinement of this great charge to this small number of hands, is this, that the nation is thereby often necessitated to entrust the conduct of her most important affairs in the East-Indies to the management of such as may have no other title or claim besides that of affinity to, or the favour of, a director, and who, had he only his own talents or merit to raise and support him, might in the service of his country never have risen higher than an Excise or Custom-house officer, though his post there shall be  
such

such as a high prince or the first peer in this realm might not disdain, either for the grandeur of the charge, or the emoluments of the place to accept; (for 300,000 *l. per annum* is a royal salary, and to rule kings and nations is not unworthy a prince) yet should any of these, either through misconduct or with design, grievously injure the national interest, or wound her honour, they are accountable only to the 24 directors for their conduct.

I should be sorry to appear an incendiary, but cannot help observing here, what may prevent the like danger in future, that the meanness and lowness of our confined company procuring it so little respect from the nation, their concerns lie intirely at the discretion and mercy of the minister; for although in both the national wars in which the company was engaged, things have through the goodness of God turned out extremely fortunate, yet as wise men never allow themselves to be guided entirely by events, without enquiring into the causes that produced them; an account of the causes of our success on these two and one other occasion, placing the merit where it is due, may prevent our being lulled into remissness, by trusting to aids which we ought not in human prudence absolutely to confide in, without also exerting ourselves. In

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that which was the first national war in which our East-India company was engaged, this company had so much neglected their settlements abroad, as never having been before in a warlike state, and the then minister, who extended the war to these countries, had been at so little pains to inform himself of the state of their affairs, and had so much neglected to send out a sufficient force to support them, that M. De La Bourdonnais arriving there with his squadron, found not the smallest resistance from Madras, their capital on the coast of Coromandel, which being the most exposed, may be supposed to be the strongest they had in India. The spirit of envy and dissension stirred up betwixt their chiefs, and a strong wind sent by the favour of the Almighty to disperse and sink part of their squadron, causes in which we cannot assume the least merit, were the only obstacles that on this occasion prevented the loss of all the East-India company's settlements in India. In the ensuing company's war on that coast during the national peace, wherein it was disputed whether the French should be sovereigns of all Indostan, or the English nation retain their humble settlements, it was not owing to the support of the company, hampered with the narrowness of their stock, but to the extraordinary efforts and  
 luckily

luckily superior courage and conduct of two English officers, that the French did not then absolutely carry their point. In the last national war likewise the French were greatly beforehand with both the company and nation. When Mr. Lally arrived on that coast with a force in all human probability sufficient (to make use of his own expression) to swallow up the three capital English settlements as the three meals of one day, (and these indeed were but a secondary view) then again not ourselves, but the *Lord of Hosts* fought for us; for he sent amongst our enemies the spirit of pride, of discord, and of infatuation, which wrought wonders in our favour; and so thus again were we saved: justly may we sing therefore *Non nobis*. But shall we rest ourselves always secure on this unmerited aid? shall we ever thus lie a dead weight on the hands of the Lord? if we do he may at last drop us, for we have reason to expect that our adversaries, grown wiser by two unlucky miscarriages, will avoid the rocks on which they before split. If what hath been said hath no weight, it will be needless to add any more on this subject. Besides this probing gives pain, and that I am averse to. Yet as example has often more weight than precept or counsel, I shall take the liberty to place before our eyes one or two in-

stances of this kind. The first shall be that of the Dutch West-India company, being in itself most similar in its circumstances to our own case: Avert the omen, good Heaven! I mean in all but the catastrophe. The Dutch nation, after having shaken off the yoke of Spain, and asserted their independence and freedom, became extremely rich, by reason of their most extensive commerce. This was the most glorious æra of that people, or indeed of any trading nation, for theirs did at this time greatly exceed that of all their neighbours. They had towards the end of their war with Spain attacked the Portuguese colonies in Brazil, which they had a right to do, the sovereignty of Portugal being at that time vested in the person of Philip. They soon overran and made themselves masters of three of the four districts, they established themselves there; and that truly mercantile people became quickly sensible of the real value of their acquisition. The nation established a company to carry on and extend that trade, which, under the name of the Dutch West-India company, became in a little time of such consequence, that Prince Maurice did not disdain, nor think it below him, to serve this company in quality of governor of their settlements. This prince was a person of great penetration and understanding, and being

ing also a prince, his views extended greatly beyond the temporary short-sighted ones of merchants: He began first to secure what he had got, by building forts, and sending over to the mother country for troops; the natives there, who were mostly of Portuguese mixed breed, he treated with indulgence, so far even as to advance them money on the company's account, in order to enable them to plant and improve the country. This increase of expence diminishing the profits, did not answer the expectations of the company, who had been rendered over sanguine by the great and unlooked-for success of their rival the East-India company. They began therefore to find that a prince was not a fit governor for merchants, and after thanking him for his services, civilly acquainted him, that their affairs being now through his means in a flourishing situation, they had no farther occasion for his assistance. They sent out four governors, men according to their own hearts. The first, if I remember right, was a goldsmith, the second a haberdasher, the third a broken merchant, and the fourth might be a superannuated sea-captain. These four able rulers arriving in their government, immediately entered on business, consulting on such ways and means as should most fully answer the ends for which they had been so distinguishedly ap-

appointed by their constituents. They immediately perceived that the expence of maintaining such a large force as the prince had for parade introduced there, was excessive, and altogether unnecessary, they therefore dismissed the greatest part both of the officers and men, who accordingly returned to Europe along with prince Maurice. They next discovered that the late governor had entered into a foolish extravagant scheme of building forts, magazines, &c. These appearing unnecessary, they immediately discontinued what was not finished. Soon after, on inspecting their books, they found that their predecessor had lavished great sums of their honourable masters money on the natives there. These sums therefore they set about collecting and calling in, and in this they proceeded with so much rigour, that they greatly harassed and disgusted the debtors. They likewise contrived methods to oblige all hands to work how and when they pleased in the plantations. Thus these gentlemen, if we may call them such, gave great satisfaction to their masters; for in the first year of their government the company found that by the reduction of expences, the collecting in the debts, and an extraordinary remittance of goods, their profits were vastly greater than they had been for the three preceding years,  
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taken all together. During the two following years these money-making governors conducted their affairs with the like success and applause. But then—alas!—(Now cannot I help thinking of the old woman and her gold-laying hen) the contemned, and indeed truly contemptible but oppressed natives, began to resent their cruel usage, and retaliate on the Dutch, at first in small parties. The governors, who came out there only to make money for their masters—and themselves, knew as little of the art of fighting as they did of governing; and this their foible was quickly discovered by their adversaries, who were thereby greatly encouraged; and receiving underhand aid in arms and counsel from the governor of the district yet remaining to the Portuguese, they declared open war against the Dutch, who having but few soldiers, and those badly conducted, were obliged to take refuge in such forts as prince Maurice had finished.

The governors soon acquainted their constituents in Europe with this change in their affairs, who sent them out a scanty reinforcement. At last the matter beginning to grow a little more serious, the Dutch nation took the alarm, and sent out a force, which, though it defeated the Spanish squadron at sea, yet proved greatly insufficient to recover their influence in these countries: In short, notwithstanding the Dutch, who  
were

were at that time excessively powerful at sea, did employ that whole power in no less than three different efforts, in one of which they sent out 35 ships of the line, yet were they in the end obliged to desist; not in justice to the Portugueze, who had before the termination of this dispute reclaimed their sovereignty, but were so much afraid of the *Hogen Mogen Heers*, that they durst scarcely avow their supporting the natives, but entirely in consequence of their being fairly baffled. Thus this at that time mighty trading nation, which is as tenacious of its interests as any, was, through the narrow spiritedness of its West-India company, and its governors; without the interposition of any foreign powers, deprived for ever of one of the richest and noblest settlements known. As I have not the account now by me, I may not perhaps be quite exact in every circumstance, but yet will it be found in the main just enough. We have also seen these Portugueze, who first discovered the passage to the East-Indies, and by that prior advantage had rendered themselves very powerful in those countries, reduced to be the most contemptible of any of the European nations trading thither, and this entirely occasioned by extending their influence beyond what they could maintain and support, and also by the  
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disgust of the oppressed natives. We have seen likewise in our own days the French, a most enterprising nation, reduced to her primitive state in those countries, without force, without settlements, altogether owing to their grasping at too much. If examples ought to have any weight, let us learn at the cost of others, that we may not be put ourselves to the expence of dear-bought experience. But though I have taken upon me to act as a surgeon or a prober, yet will I not, as not having been regularly graduated, presume to practise in the higher character of physician; that is the province of more skilful heads and hands. If I dare not however prescribe or order what ought to be done, yet will I venture to tell such as may know less than myself, and those may be but few, what we ought not to do. And should what I have said have any weight with such, I would advise them in this case not to desire or expect corrosives, or too harsh remedies, which may only serve to irritate, inflame, and render incurable that sore which may be more easily removed by lenitives. I know that it hath often on less occasions been moved, that the charter of this company ought to be taken away, and the trade laid open; and great advantages have been promised to the nation from such a step: lest any such de-

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fire may be now again revived, I shall at the same time I have been disclosing the defects of the company, endeavour to obviate any prejudices that may arise against its existence ; and though I neither can nor need say but little that has not been already written by others on this head, yet as it may be more convenient for my readers to find here the arguments of Postlethwaite and others, than to be obliged to have recourse for them to large volumes, I shall take the liberty to subjoin them, in answer to the objections started by the opposite side.

“ It is frequently said that our East-India  
 “ company does not trade and exert them-  
 “ selves to the full extent of their charter ;  
 “ but that if private traders had the unre-  
 “ strained liberty to drive this trade to the  
 “ full latitude it would admit of, they would  
 “ leave no part of India untraded to, espe-  
 “ cially all that are within the limits and  
 “ jurisdiction of the British rights.—In an-  
 “ swer to this it is said, that the company’s  
 “ not prosecuting this commerce to the ex-  
 “ tent as is pretended which it will admit  
 “ of, cannot proceed from a deficiency of  
 “ capital or credit ; and what reason have  
 “ we to believe that they should be back-  
 “ ward in augmenting their gains to the  
 “ utmost degree in their power ?—A com-  
 “ pany ; it is said, cannot trade at so small

“ an expence, and therefore cannot afford  
 “ to trade for so small a profit, as private  
 “ traders can. This is allowed to be true  
 “ in the general; but before this matter  
 “ comes to be considered, the previous que-  
 “ stion is, whether we should enjoy any  
 “ share at all in this trade, if not by virtue  
 “ of the company's forts and settlements?

“ The extensive correspondence, and high  
 “ credit of this company in the Indies will  
 “ certainly capacitate them to traffick in  
 “ every corner of that part of the world  
 “ within their right and privilege where they  
 “ can be gainers, and to do so where they  
 “ must be losers, would shew little regard  
 “ to the interest of the proprietors. But  
 “ the point, if we are rightly informed, lies  
 “ here: Such branches of trade which the  
 “ company either cannot gain at all by, or  
 “ are not so gainful as others they prefer to  
 “ engage in, are actually carried on by pri-  
 “ vate British merchants, under the com-  
 “ pany's licence and authority; nor is the  
 “ company scrupulous in granting such li-  
 “ cences to persons of reputation. But as a  
 “ general and unanswerable reply to all ob-  
 “ jections, we may advance the universal  
 “ conduct of all the European nations trad-  
 “ ing to India, who whenever they adven-  
 “ tured to interfere in this trade, have con-  
 “ stantly put it under the management of a

“ company; and what is to be dreaded is,  
 “ that if we should be induced to lay so  
 “ distant a trade open, while our formida-  
 “ ble rivals therein carry the same on by  
 “ joint-stock companies, with great publick  
 “ encouragement, privileges, and immuni-  
 “ ties, we should lose all share therein what-  
 “ soever. However, when other European  
 “ nations do so, we may venture to follow  
 “ their example without hazard, but let us  
 “ not be the first to make the experiment.  
 “ Whoever shall consider how things are to  
 “ be distributed and conducted in the In-  
 “ dies, and what a connection and depen-  
 “ dency there is between the commerce of  
 “ the several countries included within the  
 “ East-India company’s charter, will easily  
 “ discern that if the whole trade, was  
 “ in the hands of a disjointed number of  
 “ separate traders, and not under the ma-  
 “ nagement and direction of a body of men  
 “ conversant and thoroughly experienced  
 “ therein, and not only capable of giving  
 “ judicious directions, but duly impowered to  
 “ see these directions carried into execution,  
 “ would be impossible that this commerce  
 “ should continue prosperous, or even that  
 “ it should at all subsist. Experience has  
 “ effectually shewn the mischiefs that flowed  
 “ from the subsistence, of at the same time  
 “ only two East-India companies, the new  
 “ and

“ and old ; so great they were, that both  
 “ the companies soon became sensible that  
 “ nothing but the union of their interests  
 “ could possibly afford a proper remedy.  
 “ Yet we conceive that the laying this trade  
 “ open, which is what hath been often con-  
 “ tended for, would be a scheme big with  
 “ still greater evils and inconveniences, be-  
 “ cause it would be at the bottom, a multi-  
 “ plication of companies, all acting upon  
 “ separate interests, which would certainly  
 “ be perpetually clashing and interposing  
 “ with each other, and give the powerful  
 “ and united interests of other nations op-  
 “ portunities to destroy them all, and for ever  
 “ exclude Britons from the whole Asiatic  
 “ trade. It may in like manner be conceived,  
 “ that if the possession of the forts and set-  
 “ tlements were in the crown, and the ma-  
 “ nagement of the trade only in the hands  
 “ of the company, it could not but be at-  
 “ tended with numberless inconveniences,  
 “ as, indeed experience shewed in the reign  
 “ of king Charles the second, when Bom-  
 “ bay came to the crown, by his marriage  
 “ with the infanta of Portugal ; and there-  
 “ fore both that island and the island of St.  
 “ Helena, have been granted to the East-  
 “ India company, for the sake of publick  
 “ conveniency. We may likewise discover  
 “ from the disorder of the company’s affairs  
 “ in

“ in that reign, and in the reign of king  
 “ James, that it is highly detrimental  
 “ to this commerce, and to the benefits re-  
 “ sulting from thence to the nation, that the  
 “ company should be immediately under the  
 “ power of the crown, so as to stand indebted  
 “ for all encouragement, and to have no other  
 “ resource in case of grievances than what  
 “ they can draw from royal power; for this  
 “ on the one hand renders trade precarious,  
 “ and on the other interests a great body  
 “ of people in the support of the preroga-  
 “ tive, which might be attended with con-  
 “ sequences injurious to the constitution.

“ But notwithstanding it is for the inte-  
 “ rest of the public, as well as of the pro-  
 “ prietors of the company, that a watchful  
 “ eye should be had over this company,  
 “ lest those privileges and immunities should  
 “ be abused, and the commerce should not  
 “ be conducted as well for the interests of  
 “ the nation, as that of the constituents of  
 “ the corporation. And if any reasonable  
 “ measures can be suggested for the advance-  
 “ ment of these reciprocal interests, they  
 “ should be laid before the legislature,” &c,  
 So far Mr. Postlewhaite. He argued in a calm;  
*Tempora mutantur.* Yet his arguments for  
 carrying on this trade by a company seem quite  
 reasonable; and now seems to be the time he  
 means for keeping a watchful eye, &c, I have

as much as I think necessary, and that without selfish view, or design to inflame the minds of men. And if what I have advanced does rouse the proprietors from that lethargy, that indifference to their interesting concerns, it will in some measure answer my purpose; or if it only engages these stock-holders, to look a little more into their concerns, and examine the abilities of those whom they shall be content to choose for their directors. Absurd is the present practice of choosing men, who are to be charged with such a high trust, by the lump in a printed list, which possibly of the 24 names in that list the proprietor knows only two or three, and nominates the others, because they happen to be friends to his friend; and where the whole 24 may be known by the proprietor receiving this list, there may of that number not be more than 4 to whose skill in business he would trust 100*l.* of his own private fortune. Ought not therefore every proprietor to make it his care to enquire into the characters, abilities, and understanding, of all such as are willing to serve the company in capacity of directors, and of them make out a list of his own choosing? Let the proprietors consider that they are supposed to stand in the gap between this country and danger; and that on their choice greatly depends the well or ill conducting of the greatest commercial concerns of this nation.

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as much as I think necessary, and that without selfish view, or design to inflame the minds of men. And if what I have advanced does touch the proprietors from that lethargy, that indifference to their interesting concerns, it will in some measure answer my purpose; or if it only engages these stock-holders to look a little more into their concerns, and examine the abilities of those whom they shall be content to choose for their directors. Albeit is the present practice of choosing men, who are to be charged with such a high trust, by the jump in a printed list, which possibly of the names in that list the proprietor knows or does not know, and nominates the others as they happen to be friends to him, and where the whole may be known by the proprietor receiving this list, there may of the number not be more than a to whose skill in business he would trust 1000 of his own private fortune. Ought not therefore every proprietor to make it his care to enquire into the characters, abilities, and understanding of all such as are willing to serve the company in capacity of directors, and of them make out a list of his own choosing? Let the proprietors consider that they are supposed to stand in the gap between this country and danger, and that on their choice greatly depends the well or ill conducting of the greatest commercial concerns of this nation.



